

# Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health

## OF THE

# Urban District of Farnham for 1894.

The year 1894 has had a much less incidence of Zymotic Disease than 1893, and since June the number of notifications I have received has been very small. In all during the year there have been 21 Scarlatina, 4 Diphtheria, 1 Typhoid Fever, and 8 Erysipelas, distributed as seen in the following table :—

|                 | Scarlatina. | Diphtheria. | Typhoid Fever. | Erysipelas. |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| January .....   | 6           | ..          | ..             | ..          |
| February .....  | 5           | 1           | 1              | 2           |
| March .....     | 6           | ..          | ..             | ..          |
| April .....     | 1           | 2           | ..             | ..          |
| May .....       | 1           | ..          | ..             | 1           |
| June .....      | 1           | 1           | ..             | ..          |
| July .....      | ..          | ..          | ..             | ..          |
| August .....    | ..          | ..          | ..             | ..          |
| September ..... | ..          | ..          | ..             | 2           |
| October .....   | ..          | ..          | ..             | ..          |
| November .....  | ..          | ..          | ..             | 1           |
| December .....  | 1           | ..          | ..             | 2           |

It will be remembered that during the period June to November, 1893, an Epidemic of Scarlatina was in progress with the numbers increasing month by month, but this came to an end in the latter month, apparently as the result of my having found a child desquamating after Scarlatina in regular attendance at School, and my having kept him at home till I was satisfied that he was non-infectious. Scarlatina began again in January, 1894, before the Schools had recommenced after the Christmas holidays, and I had notified to me, as will be seen by the table—6 cases in January, 5 in February, 6 in March, 1 in April, 1 in May, and 1 in June, but none afterwards. In February my suspicions were aroused about the West Street Board Schools in relation to some of these cases; so on the 8th and 9th February I obtained leave to inspect the scholars. In the Boys' School I found one boy (Adams) undoubtedly desquamating, and in the Infants' School I found one child (Hammond) whom I considered doubtful, and whom, when I found that his sisters were in the infectious wards of the Union suffering from Scarlatina, I treated as a case of the disease and kept at home till I was satisfied his desquamation had finished. The boy Adams was repeatedly visited at home, and kept there till I considered him quite fit to mix with other children. This examination of the children did not check the Epidemic, however, as it appeared to have done in November, 1893; but the fact mentioned above that cases began to be notified to me before the Schools had recommenced work, shewed that the disease was being propagated in some other way than through the medium of the Schools, indeed, in one case at any rate, the source of infection was traced from one house to another. Of these 21 cases, 12 were removed to the infectious wards of the Union, and one from its own home to a cottage for isolation purposes, because in all the cases there was no possibility of efficient isolation at home.

The 4 cases of Diphtheria did not occur close together as regards time, so as to partake of the nature of an Epidemic. Two of them were in Beaver's Yard, where the drainage arrangements were far from good; no water was laid on to the closets, there was no ventilator to the closets to themselves, though there was to the drain, and the closet accommodation was insufficient (only at the rate of 1 to 3 households) but I may say that this state of affairs has been slightly improved by the addition of some more closets. In one other case the drainage was good, and one occurred in the dwelling house connected with the Station, where the water supply to the closet was very bad and irregular. The one case of Typhoid Fever was probably traceable to the bad system of drainage at the Railway Station; it occurred in the daughter of the Ladies' Waiting-room attendant, who had been taking her mother's place for a time; at her home the drainage was moderately good, at any rate it was not in nearly such an insanitary condition as the Station was then. The Company have since this remedied this very bad state of things by putting in a new set of closets, and thus making it all satisfactory. Five cases of Diphtheria were admitted to the infectious wards of the Union; but in only one case was it necessary for me to take any action, and that was in the case of a tramp who had travelled by road from London, sleeping at several places on the way, and had probably been suffering from Diphtheria in an infectious stage all the time of this journey. I found out where he had slept each night, and wrote to the Medical Officers of Health of the four places, informing them of the man's having slept in their districts on certain specified nights.

No cases of Smallpox occurred in the town, but there were 4 cases in the Union amongst inmates in July I saw these cases and examined the Union premises, in conjunction with the Medical Officer twice, and once with the Medical Officer to the Surrey County Council as well, who kindly came down to give his opinion and advice, and in my Report, date 28th July, 1894, accompanied by a plan of the premises, I expressed the opinion that in all probability the infection was introduced by some tramp, and suggested some slight alterations in the structural arrangements by which communication between tramps and inmates could be almost entirely stopped, but this did not appear to commend itself to the Guardians, and I understand nothing has been done in this direction. I hope they have taken precautions of some other kind to prevent another Epidemic occurring.

The cases of Erysipelas do not appear to have been due to bad drainage, for in only one case, namely, at Castle View, were the conditions found to be at all bad, and here no water is laid on to the closet, and it is only the main pipe for all the row of houses which is ventilated, and not each individual closet.

I was requested by the Board to visit and report on a house in West Street, in the occupation of Mr. F. Burningham, as it was thought to be so bad as to be unfit for human habitation. I was unable, after careful measurement of the rooms (with the Surveyor) and inspection of the premises, to condemn it in these terms, though I expressed my opinion that the amount of cubic space was very much less than was good for living in. Mr. Burningham still continues to live there with no alterations. Also, at the request of the Board, I inspected 4 houses in Red Lion Lane, with the Surveyor. I considered 2 of them unfit for human habitation, and signed a paper to that effect. The houses are no longer inhabited, but have not been pulled down. Also, with the Surveyor, I inspected the yard of Mr. Wicks, butcher, West Street, which was said to be a great nuisance to his neighbours. We found the yard in a most unsanitary condition, and quite likely to cause great annoyance. This has been, to a great extent, remedied since. I received a complaint from Mrs. O'Keefe in "Army and Navy" Yard, East Street, of a very bad smell from a gulley just outside her house door. I found that it communicated direct with the drain without being trapped; the gulley has since been stopped up, and I have had no complaint again. In March my attention was drawn to the case of a boy who had come from The Hatches into lodgings in West Street while in an infectious stage of Scarlatina, walking through the public highways, and without the Farnham landlady having been informed, though he himself and his mother had both been told that he was infectious. I thought it right that the boy should be prosecuted for exposing himself in public while suffering from a dangerous infectious disease. The case was proved to the Magistrates, but it came out in the course of the case that the landlord at The Hatches had compelled them to go out, and so the Magistrates dismissed the case without inflicting any penalty.

It seems to me that there are two principal deductions to be drawn from the foregoing—(1) That we are greatly in need of having water laid on to more premises for flushing the water closets, for although the Report in this direction does not come so bad as in 1893, still there were a great many premises visited in the course of the year which were found to be not properly kept clean. (2) The advantage it would be to have an Isolation Hospital to send patients to. In the Scarlet Fever Epidemic at the beginning of the year, I came across so many houses where it would have been practically impossible to isolate cases: it will be seen from reference to what I have said above, that in 13 out of 21 cases it was necessary to remove the patients to the infectious wards of the Union, and if I am not misinformed, the Board of Guardians could at any time stop the admission of outside patients into these wards, and of course when an Epidemic was raging, and they wanted many beds themselves, would be the time when they would be compelled to take this step.

The death-rate is very nearly the same as for 1893, but I am glad to say that the rates from Zymotic Disease and in infants is less; the former decidedly, the latter slightly. I append a table giving details calculated on a population of 5600 for the Town, and 5800, including the Union.

|                    | TOTAL DEATHS. |                | FROM ZYMOTIC DISEASE. |                | UNDER 1 YEAR. |                | BIRTHS.     |                |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
|                    | With Union.   | Without Union. | With Union.           | Without Union. | With Union.   | Without Union. | With Union. | Without Union. |
| January .....      | 20            | 10             | 3                     | 3              | 0             | 0              | 9           | 9              |
| February .....     | 11            | 5              | 3                     | 2              | 1             | 0              | 10          | 10             |
| March .....        | 5             | 1              | 1                     | 0              | 0             | 0              | 16          | 16             |
| April .....        | 11            | 6              | 1                     | 0              | 2             | 2              | 10          | 10             |
| May .....          | 21            | 12             | 1                     | 1              | 4             | 4              | 8           | 8              |
| June .....         | 12            | 7              | 1                     | 1              | 1             | 1              | 17          | 14             |
| July .....         | 13            | 7              | 1                     | 0              | 3             | 2              | 8           | 8              |
| August .....       | 16            | 11             | 1                     | 0              | 0             | 0              | 8           | 8              |
| September .....    | 13            | 8              | 1                     | 1              | 1             | 1              | 14          | 14             |
| October .....      | 11            | 7              | 1                     | 1              | 4             | 4              | 11          | 10             |
| November .....     | 4             | 0              | 0                     | 0              | 0             | 0              | 14          | 14             |
| December .....     | 8             | 5              | 0                     | 0              | 0             | 0              | 13          | 12             |
| TOTAL .....        | 145           | 79             | 14                    | 9              | 16            | 14             | 138         | 133            |
| Per 1000 per annum | 25.00         | 14.10          | 2.41                  | 1.60           | 2.75          | 2.50           | 23.79       | 23.76          |
| Do. in 1893 ..     | 24.90         | 13.81          | 3.63                  | 2.00           | 3.63          | 2.90           | 32.18       | 28.00          |
| Do. in 1892 ..     | 32.72         | 21.09          | 5.63                  | 4.18           | 3.09          | 3.09           | 23.09       | 21.72          |

S. G. SLOMAN, Jun.,  
Medical Officer of Health.